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ABSTRACT

The sources of the chronic precariousness of order in public secondary schools are examined. The means of control available to principals and teachers are analyzed and the consequences of strategies of control are considered as they interact with strategies for academic education. Order and academic education as goals often require mutually contradictory actions supported by different organizational structures. The need for opposing practices to meet these two basic goals is greatest when incoming students are skeptical or challenging of the usefulness of the school's academic goals or of its good faith in pursuing them. The character of four junior high schools in two school districts is analyzed to illustrate the interaction of these factors. (Author/MLF)

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ORDER IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL: VARIATIONS ON A THEME

MARY HAYWOOD METZ

Order preoccupies the public schools. Whether one looks at concerns expressed in response to surveys or at the allocation of effort on a day to day basis, teachers and administrators give order a high priority. A careful look at the challenges to order and at the resources available for maintaining it suggests order tends to occupy the forefront of attention in schools because their fundamental organizational characteristics make disorder always an imminent possibility.

In the first part of this paper, I will consider the reasons that order is consistently problematic in public secondary schools. I will then describe the bases for, and effects of, varying policies for pursuing order in four junior high schools.

THE PROBLEM OF ORDER

Its Fragility

The modern sociological study of the school started with Waller's classic The Sociology of Teaching. That book opens with a strong statement of the fragility of order even in the most evidently peaceful schools. (Waller, 1932: 8-12). Should the reader be skeptical of this fragility let him or her summon to mind the typical public secondary school with its rows of identical boxlike classrooms and its long echoing corridors. Then consider that hundreds or even thousands of people coexist within these spaces for six hours a day. Remember that the vast majority of these people, the students, are present by legal compulsion and that all of the resident youth of the geographic area may attend, whatever their talents or moral character. Contemplate the brimming physical, social, and sexual energy of children of this age and remember that they are not yet fully socialized. In such a context, it seems more remarkable that safety and a modicum of civility are achieved in most secondary schools than that the achievement of such a state occupies much of the thought of the few adults given primary responsibility for it.

Traditional classes in which one person talks and others

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listen are easily disrupted. Only one or two students can easily distract a class of thirty for all of a period, and a series of small, even unintentional, disruptions from many different students will have the same effect. Corridors are yet more difficult settings. Their acoustical properties generally magnify sound and the din of hundreds of voices in active conversation between classes wears on the nerves of adults and raises the excitement level of children who should turn in the moment into demure scholars.

Crowds of anonymous individuals contending for cafeteria service can initiate wrangles which escalate into group confrontations. Empty halls and bathrooms provide opportunities for drug sales and consumption, for vandalism, and for predatory acts. Even though most students cooperate most of the time, it takes only a few intentional or unintentional acts to disrupt learning or to create an "incident" which will bring down parental or community wrath upon the school staff.

Thus, the problem of order is chronically pressing in schools both because of the strength of forces which can create disorder and because of the vulnerability of their physical and social settings to the disruptive effects of these forces. Less evidently, order is a constant problem because schools' resources for control are slim and uncertain.

Available Modes of Control

Etzioni (1961) provides one of the broadest sets of categories for analyzing modes of control. He divides control into normative, utilitarian, and coercive forms. Each implies a complementary form of attachment on the part of those who are controlled. The school is expected to operate in all three modes, depending upon the task and the character of the student body. But it is not adequately equipped to operate effectively and reliably in any. Let us consider each of these modes of control and then explore the strategies which schools most commonly develop for controlling their students when none of these easily suffices.

Education is supposed to benefit children as well as the society in which they will live. Their attachment to the school should be a normative one. One can draw an analogy between the relationship of students with their teachers and that of patients with doctors or of other clients with persons who offer complex professional services. However as Bidwell (1970) has pointed out, there are several crucial differences in these relationships. Children attend school involuntarily; they may or may not want to be educated, to seek the service the school and teacher provide. In the public schools they usually can

select neither their schools nor their teachers. Further, services they receive as part of a large group can be only roughly approximated to their particular needs. The school and the teacher, for their part, can not select or reject the clients with whom they will work but must accept whatever children live in the area and are assigned to their classrooms. Such a situation undermines the possibility of control after a professional model through mutual normative commitment of teacher and student to the task of learning. Outside the classroom there is even less support for normative control than in the classroom.

It is also possible to compare the relationship of students with teachers to that of employees with bosses or supervisors. Teachers in the schools I studied often made this analogy. Such a model implies utilitarian control--an exchange of a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. But here too there are crucial differences. Once more it is important that students are present by legal compulsion and that the school must accept every one who comes. The "worker" can not quit and the "boss" or even the "company" can not fire him--except through exceedingly cumbersome proceedings. Equally important, the students are not paid for their work, nor are they promoted or given raises for exceptional performance. Other extrinsic rewards are few, and for some students of questionable value. Grades and, in the closing years, the possibility of recommendations or a record of extracurricular offices and accomplishments might seem to parallel pay and promotion. But the majority of students will not distinguish themselves, so that their only compensation for effort is the possession of a diploma. This is a distant and abstract reward. It is good mostly to ward off exclusion from the job market, not to "buy" much that is positively rewarding.

Teachers and administrators can and do attempt to generate other formal and informal rewards to give in exchange for cooperation. These range from gold stars through praise to the waiving of school rules. But the fact remains that schools lack the kind of mundane reward for work performed and cooperation given that paying employers can generally take for granted.

Schools can also be compared to organizations that rely primarily upon coercion. Their similarities to "total institutions" (cf. Eddy, 1967: 62-77) can not be dismissed. But schools have limited resources for coercion in dealing with students who are not awed by the disapproval of the school's officials, by that of their parents, or by the entry of pejorative notes in their official records. When simple reprimands fail, teachers

can detain children after school (in some districts), assign them essays or janitorial tasks, shame them in front of their peers, and finally send them to the "Office". The "Office" can try the same repertoire of reprimand, detention, and extra duty. In some districts they may use physical punishment in the form of the "paddle". They may also call parents, and--finally--suspend the child from school. At the worst, after repeated suspensions and with a series of hearings, they may expel him or her.

The bite in most of these coercive steps lies in inconvenience and even more in embarrassment, in subjection to the disapproval of awesome adults. But familiarity breeds contempt. Once children have been sent to the office many times (or their friends have) they lose their awe of the assistant principal or disciplinary dean. They may also be used to whatever wrath or punishments their parents inflict. And suspension--thought of by the faculties of the schools discussed below as the ultimate weapon--can become a pleasant holiday to students who have hardened their hides to adult disapproval.

In short, schools are woefully lacking in resources for controlling their students. When possible schools are likely to generate power over students by creating an illusion of greater resources for control than they could actually exercise if pushed by disobedience. Data from the four schools I studied, including adults' descriptions of other schools where they had worked, suggested that these illusions are commonly of one of two kinds.

Students will expect to cooperate in general with a school's requirements when they perceive the school as continuous in its expectations for performance and decorum with the rest of their social context, and when they expect that successful performance will bestow benefits upon them, or at the least that adequate performance will forestall losses. The school must turn that general readiness for compliance into a basis for cooperation in specific situations where disobedience might be more immediately rewarding. It does so by relying upon the lack of experience and sophistication of students to make school procedures seem inevitable laws of behavior. First, and most important, many physically and even socially feasible forms of evasion and rebellion may simply never occur to students. They accept school routines as they do driving on the right side of the road, as an unexamined part of social existence. Adults foster this innocence with efforts to keep infractions which do occur from becoming generally known among the students. And they generate a calm expectation of compliance which

suggests to the students that disobedience would bring shocked disapproval and awesome, though vaguely conceived, punishment. This method of control resembles that which supports public etiquette. In the school context, it could be called the institutionalization of innocence.

When school routines and decorum require students to alter their habitual style of behavior, and when they do not expect to profit much from their participation, this form of control can not be used. A related form may be used which concentrates upon establishing in students' minds a myth of the awesome coercive power of the school. As in prisons (c.f., Sykes, 1958: 18-25), this form of control requires strict regimentation of all behavior so that deviations are easily seen. The first visible infractions must be dealt with sternly. The students may be able to envision all kinds of disallowed behavior, but the school makes the expected price very high.

This pattern of control depends for its force on swift, consistent punishment of a few exemplary offenders. Once large numbers start breaking the rules, the sting of smaller punishments weakens with familiarity, and the school must use the more serious ones increasingly less readily in order to have a deterrent in reserve that has not become tolerable through common experience. But if the myth of coercive power can be successfully maintained, the students need not know of this weakness.

Both of these patterns depend upon the school's establishing a social definition of the situation which does not fit "reality".[2] If the students accept the definition, it is real for them and operates to control them. But it is nonetheless a fragile social fabrication

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[2]Of course there is a sense in which this description applies to all socially defined situations--to social life itself. From W. I. Thomas's introduction of the concept of "the definition of the situation" to Berger and Luckmann's recent discussion of "the social construction of reality" (1966) such processes have been seen to be at the core of social life of almost every kind. Waller explicitly used Thomas's concept in discussing the tenuous power underlying school routine and the consequent need for adults to seize the initiative in defining the situation for students if they do not wish the reverse to occur. (Waller, 1932: 292-316).

requiring careful nurture by the adults.

Structures Supporting Control

Either of the patterns of control I have described requires that the students believe the character of the school to be inevitable and unchangeable. It must not occur to them to challenge it in any serious way, lest they discover how easily evasion and defiance can be accomplished by the determined or by large numbers in league with one another. To instill such a perspective, the character of the school must be unified. It must be standardized and routinized. Not only the temporal and spatial routines but the definitions of relationships and even the curriculum itself must be presented in a similar way in each classroom.

Schools using these patterns of control require structures which will support unity of style and procedure. Such structures involve clear hierarchy and centralized decision making about everything from the curriculum to hall passes. Aside from relatively insubstantial matters of personal idiosyncracy, the staff must be expected to interact uniformly with students and to present them standardized tasks, expectations, and rules both inside and outside the classroom.

TENSION BETWEEN ORDER AND EDUCATION

Such structures and such a curriculum and style of teaching may support order, but they are hardly to be recommended for maximally effective education. On the contrary, the variable character of students, and the non-routine and poorly understood character of the teaching and learning process (c.f. Jackson, 1968: 159-163; Boocock, 1973) suggest that structures should allow teachers maximal autonomy and the resources to fit their methods to the demands of each task with variable groups of students. (Udy, 1965, 690-691; Perrow, 1967: 197-202). At the university level--where age and voluntarism have traditionally minimized problems of order around the classroom--such a model is approximated.

Further, the need for flexible, individually tailored, teaching methods is greatest precisely where students are most likely to cause problems of order. At one end of the social spectrum, well trained and capable upper middle class students have been demanding a varied education tailored to their interests. And for a while at least,

they sat in or tuned out when they did not get it. At the other end of the social spectrum, students who expect to fail whether or not they make an effort in school (c.f. Ogbu, 1974: 97-100) create the greatest order problems (c.f. Stinchcombe, 1964: 49-102; Hargreaves, 1967) and require the greatest educational flexibility to break through their consequent alienation.

With such populations measures designed to create order may increase students' estrangement from the school and its formally designated purposes and thus increase their motivation for intentional disorder. But measures designed to win their commitment to the educational process and thus their voluntary participation in support of a safe and orderly school will undercut either institutionalized innocence or a myth of coercive control. They will leave the school with slim resources for controlling those whose normative commitment it can not win.

THE EFFECTS OF A SCHOOL'S ENVIRONMENT

While all schools experience tension between the technology and structure needed for education and that needed for order, they vary significantly in the severity with which they experience the conflict. The kind of education needed or expected by students, staff, parents and community varies between schools and school districts. The kind and degree of threat to safety and civility potentially offered by students is similarly variable. Furthermore, the detailed character of the pressures exerted upon the school and the style of the school which emerges from its responses to those pressures depend upon an array of independently variable specific circumstances ranging from the design of the physical plant to the personality and social skill of the principal.

A number of studies have used survey methods to address the effects of variation in schools' structures, patterns of authority, and teaching practices upon one another or upon the behavior or learning of the students. They have come up with intriguing but extremely complex patterns of interaction among the factors they study. (cf. Coleman 1966; Nordstrom et al., 1967; Anderson, 1968; Corwin 1970; Wittes, 1970.) In order to grasp the range of significant factors affecting these matters, let alone the kinds of constellations of factors which form more than the sum of their parts, we need a great many ethnographic studies which can begin with events in their specificity, subtlety, and interdependence and move

from there to generalizations. Despite the classic character of these questions, there are only a few full length works of this kind (e.g. Gracey, 1972; McPherson, 1972; Swidler, 1975).

In the rest of this paper, I will outline the way that four junior high schools in two districts dealt with problems of order and the task of education. In all four schools I conducted semi-structured interviews, analyzed documents, and observed in classes, in the public spaces of the school, and in teachers' gathering places. The field work in Canton (Metz, forthcoming) took more than a school year, while that in Avon (Metz, 1976) was accomplished in a spring.[3]

THE SCHOOLS OF CANTON: HAMILTON AND CHAUNCEY

"Canton" is a city of over 100,000 which is part of a large and cosmopolitan urban area. It is home to a university and to light industry. The junior high schools have been desegregated so that each reflects the social and racial composition of the city's students; each is close to forty-one per cent black. Their social composition is unusual with a heavy concentration of children of college and postgraduate educated white families, a heavy concentration of children from black working class families, and small numbers of children from white lower middle and working class families.

At the time of the study the first two groups of students were especially restless and ready to test the validity of adults' moral claims. Order was problematic--though in somewhat different ways--as the schools dealt with both groups.

Both sets of parents were active in educational matters. The highly educated white parents were jealous

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[3] In a paper of this length it is not possible to include either the data which support the broad generalizations which follow or the qualifying complexities which existed at each school. The reader interested in these matters will find them presented in the two longer sources cited in the text. Here the particular schools are described only to give the reader a feeling for the ways in which the general processes I have identified come alive in the complicated flow of events in real schools.

of their children's liberties and their intellectual individuality in the fact of a potentially monolithic educational system, and, because of the presence of a respected public university in the state, unusually lacking in anxiety about their children's records. The black parents were more concerned with educational fundamentals, but they also kept a close eye upon the extent and even-handedness of school discipline.

These schools thus existed in an environment in which the character of the students made it unusually difficult to maintain order or to engage students' academic co-operation at a level equal to their capacities and needs. And the parents would tolerate little failure on either front.

Responding to the demands of the parental segment of the environment, the board and the school administration embraced educational goals as their foremost concern. They constructed a structure and process for the system which was designed to support academic efforts. They allowed principals and teachers considerable autonomy. Teachers were actively encouraged to choose their own educational materials and to design their own curriculum within a broad common framework--especially in the more loosely structured subjects. Forms and procedures for their evaluation were revised to de-emphasize housekeeping and order and to reward academic imagination and effectiveness.

While designing the structure of the organization for academic goals, the school board and administration did not significantly relax their expectations for decorum in the schools. They held every principal and staff accountable for safety and calm within the school even though they had modified or eliminated many of the practices and organizational structures which ordinarily support order. The contradictions of the schools' tasks with all their special pungence in this environment were placed squarely on the shoulders of the individual school staffs.

The area supplied a pool of talented and dedicated teachers who were duly hired and who embraced their academic opportunities. Still, order was consistently under threat at both schools, creating a dilemma the two schools confronted in contrasting ways.

Hamilton

At Hamilton the character of the school was deeply affected by the values and actions of the teachers. Dominant among them were a cadre of young but experienced enthusiasts, most of whom were hired after the desegregation of the school four years previous to the study. They met the challenges of the most able students successfully with the introduction of intellectually advanced material, encouragement of class discussion, and a flexible set of academic projects which allowed room for individual initiative and variation. With the alienated black students from the poor areas of the city, the task was harder. They introduced material designed to attract students' intrinsic interest. And they worked out informal resources for exchange by relaxing classroom decorum and ignoring school rules in explicit or implicit trade (c.f. Gouldner, 1954: 172-174; Blau, 1963: 215-217) for increased levels of academic cooperation during at least part of the class time. They had some success in eliciting interest and effort from the more resistant students.

But these teachers' methods undercut the taken-for-granted character of the school. For those who might have accepted its ways as inevitable, they raised the possibility of exceptions and adjustments, of working the system or of changing it. For those who resented its ways as oppressive, they suggested that coercion was not an inevitable response to resistance. These educational methods supported order insofar as they increased the academic commitment and the personal involvement of the students with the school and its purposes. But they weakened order by making the school's vulnerability to resistance evident to those students who were for any reason left without a sense of belonging or enthusiasm.

The problem was exacerbated further by the presence of a large group of faculty oldtimers who bitterly resented the change in the student body and who had not learned to cope well with the working class black children who were newly attending what had been an overwhelmingly white middle and upper middle class school. They demanded strict adherence to traditional classroom demeanor and curricular topics. Students thus encountered not only variety, but radically inconsistent expectations and demands, as they moved from class to class. Further, personal conflict between the groups of teachers became so acrimonious that the atmosphere of hostility among the faculty became a source of uneasiness and disorder among the students.

The principal was highly aware that the district administration had created a structure intended to grant teachers autonomy to follow their pedagogical lights and to adjust to the needs of each class as they judged best. Once he had started his own administration in the same spirit, he had to continue on this path, for every decisive decree affecting the school as a whole became a partisan act favoring one faculty faction or the other. At the same time, the principal was the single officer most accountable for order and he felt keenly the strains placed upon it by a structure which encouraged so much individualized initiative among faculty and often among students as well. He articulated the contradictions in the expectations held for the individual school by Canton district policy with unusual clarity. Still, he passed the contradictions along to the faculty and students, allowing much individualistic action but taking what measures he could to persuade teachers and students to use their freedom with a sense of responsibility for order.

In comparison to the matched student body at Chauncey, as well as to the students of Avon's schools, Hamilton's students were notable for their alertness, curiosity, and engagement with the school and its academic tasks. Hamilton students were also remarkable for their boisterousness and rudeness. And a few students created serious problems, such as false fire alarms, fires in washbasins, and minor physical attacks upon their fellows. Disorder rose through the year and in the spring the principal--who was formally accountable--resigned under pressure.

Chauncey

Chauncey had experienced little change when attendance boundaries were redrawn. The school had been desegregated in both class and race with a gradual change in its neighborhoods. The faculty of long tenure had chosen to stay at such a school when they might have transferred to the elite Hamilton. The district personnel office assigned as new teachers to this stable situation the least experienced and least zealous of its recruits.

In the midst of such relative calm, Chauncey's strong-willed principal was able to take a very active role in shaping the definition of the school's character for both teachers and students. He used his principal's autonomy in a loosely co-ordinated system to give clear priority to order and to create within the school a hierarchical, tightly co-ordinated structure to support forms of control dependent on such a setting--despite an appearance of

freedom for teachers and of consultation with students which satisfied the district's formal expectations for their autonomy.

He accomplished this feat through creating for faculty as well as students the kind of constructed reality I have described as the institutionalization of innocence. He lost no opportunity, no matter how small, to arrange events, communications, committees, and so forth in such a manner that he defined the character of appropriate action in the school. The definition of the school which he imposed emphasized an inherent form and practice which one must accept in order to participate. He cited state laws, district directives, and the fact that this was a school, while insisting on practices often quite different from those followed across town. So successful was he in this endeavor that, even though teachers were almost universally uncomfortable with him, they felt guilty. They were quick to excuse him on the grounds that he was constrained to policies which they did not perceive were matters of his choice. Most important, they generally followed both the spirit and the letter of his expectations.

His policies, along with the character of recruitment to the faculty, kept the teachers close to a broadly traditional teaching style, though they did work flexibly and with variations within that context. Conflict among the teachers was minimal. Students accepted their style as the necessary character of school classes, whether or not they liked it or put forth effort to learn through it.

The principal, along with the deans and counselors, also established a sweeping principle of confidentiality surrounding violations of the established order such that many students and faculty never learned of even so large an event as the walkout of all the black students at an after school dance.

Thus, to the extent that it was possible in Canton, the principal constructed a firmly hierarchical structure within the individual school in opposition to the spirit of district policy. With this structural underpinning, he also restored the taken-for-granted character of the school and the "unthinkable" quality of disobedience which provides the most efficient available form of control. This policy was backed up by relatively swift and stern punishment of students who did break rules. District pressures kept such punishments fairly mild in comparison to many school districts, but they were both more likely to be used and sterner than at Hamilton where high levels of disobedience made it impossible to punish all minor miscreants.

This policy, though successful in obtaining much better order than at Hamilton, had its educational costs. The upper middle class white students were more passive and less engaged with their studies than those at Hamilton. Poorly achieving black students in their interviews gave many more indications of psychological withdrawal from the school and of blanket hostility toward it. Substitutes who taught at both schools found the classes at all levels at Hamilton much more alive to the subject but harder to shepherd through the assigned lesson, while those at Chauncey were politer and more docile but also more mentally aloof from the educational task.

THE SCHOOLS OF AVON: DALE AND FILLMORE

"Avon" is an independent city of approximately 50,000 in a politically and socially conservative part of the midwest. Its economy is based on heavy industry and service to the surrounding agricultural area. The community is predominantly working class, but its size and isolation result in the inclusion of the full range of the social scale in a single school system. Six per cent of the population is black. Recent migrants from rural Appalachia form another but much less visible ethnic minority.

Avon's parents are generally not active in school affairs, though they rise in alarm when there are visible incidents of disorder. The majority of students, like their parents, accept routine school practice without resistance or fundamental question, though also without enthusiasm or academic vivacity.

Avon's teachers and administrators are for the most part raised and educated in the nearby area and share the local consensus on the character of education. They perceive differences in the student body solely in terms of the ability and willingness of students to incorporate the school's curriculum and routines.

Avon is dominated by white students of the broad middle band of the society which ranges from families which can rely on modestly paying but reasonably steady manual employment to those who hold lower managerial and semi-professional positions. A significant proportion of such parents (cf. Kahl, 1953; Gracey, 1972; 144-159) are more interested in the credentials for job placement or broader status which schools confer than in the content of their academic curricula. The students generally are able to master the fundamentals of literacy and mathematics whether because or in spite of the curriculum.

Those students who strive beyond these fundamentals may also do so as much for the grades earned as for the substance learned (cf. Rhea, 1968).

The Avon School District chose a path which other studies (Wordstrom et al., 1967; Schrag, 1967: 74-98; Gracey, 1972) suggest is a common one in such an environment. They reduced the conflict between educational and order goals by standardizing the curriculum and routinizing educational procedures. Avon standardized its educational technology in a common way, by adopting a single textbook for each subject in each grade and expecting the teachers to proceed systematically through it. Teachers were not generally encouraged to use supplementary materials. Partly as a result of policies and partly as a result of the pool from which teachers were chosen, they were far more similar to one another in both philosophy and practice than even those of Chauncey.

The structure of the Avon schools matched the routinization of their educational technology. Important curricular and procedural decisions were made at the district level and the rest by principals. Teachers expected only minimal autonomy in their classroom activities and only an advisory role even in policy within the individual school.

Since the curriculum was a given condition in each school and teachers' academic expectations occupied a very narrow range, behavioral expectations and procedures for maintaining order were easy to unify. Rules for movement and behavior in the schools were strict and standardized. In class or out, the routine of the school proceeded with the majority of inevitability, or the predictability of bureaucracy. To challenge it seriously, a student would have to make a considerable effort of the imagination as well as to muster the courage to face expected heavy sanctions.

Still, this strategy did not have identical consequences as it was applied at the two schools studied. Their student bodies were quite different and so responded differently. They created different environments for the individual schools. Because of these differences, it was more difficult in Avon to identify the effects of the patterns of control used by the different staffs than it was in Canton.

Dale

Dale drew from the top and bottom of Avon's social

scale as well as from its middle. The majority of its students came from either the most affluent of Avon's families or from stable middle and working class families. Less than ten per cent were black, most of them poor, but another substantial minority were whites whose parents had come from rural Appalachia.

The Appalachians for the most part responded to their sense of estrangement from the school with psychological and often physical withdrawal. The biggest problems of order they created stemmed from truancy and cutting classes and from fights with each other or black students, often off school grounds. The blacks, on the other hand, were sometimes boisterous in the halls and occasionally challenged the teachers' actions defiantly.

Despite ripples in the surface of its life created by these students, Dale maintained a smooth routine, with easily the quietest halls and visibly compliant and diligent classes of any of the four schools, whatever the achievement level of the class. It was the only one of the schools where teachers felt that the discipline of the "Office" was generally efficacious as a threat to hold over students' heads. In short the constructed reality of inevitable school routines and awesome disapproval for deviance seemed to hold, even though with strain among some students.

Dale's teachers followed the patterns desired by the district. They taught the required curriculum and did so generally with reasonable competence and good humor. Some were spritely and others dogged in their exposition, but few strayed far from the core materials or from accepted ideas of appropriate behavior for both class and teacher. They perceived differences among the students in terms of their success or failure in incorporating the material presented and abiding by expectations for classroom decorum.

The seeming inevitability of Dale's procedures appears to have become so well accepted in part because of the policies of the principal who had been in office for ten years prior to the year of the study. His strategies showed a good sense for the fact that the institutionalization of innocence depends upon making the ways of the school seem natural to students, so that it does not occur to them that conflict between the school and one or more of its members is a possibility. The school must therefore have a flexibility in its practice which allows for minor exceptions but absorbs them so that they leave no lasting mark upon its character or normal procedures.

This principal had a policy of bending the routines without breaking them. He encouraged teachers to experiment a little within the context of the curriculum. And he tolerated some

bustle in the halls and in classrooms. Deviating from practice elsewhere in the district, he let the students leave the campus for lunch, thus allowing them time to let off the morning's tensions and to exist for a while in the sole company of peers before coping with the school's routine again. He handled discipline in an unobstrusive way which minimized the visibility of the infraction and the hostility of the culprit.

The principal who took over Dale in the year of the study came from a rural system even more traditional than Avon's. He was unfamiliar with either families on welfare or black children. He found the school lax in its hall order and routines and set about tightening up operations. In so doing, he closed the safety valves designed to let off student tensions. And in making a fanfare of disciplinary acts in order to set examples, he increased the visibility of resistance and of opposition between the school and those students who found it unfamiliar or uncongenial. Student disorder, especially in the form of fights between the races, began to mount.

Further, the relatively good order which Dale still enjoyed came with an educational price even for the mainstream students. Classes at Dale were far more routinized in style and content even than Chauncey's. Boredom and detachment sometimes hung in the air, while grades--more important in the social world and psychic economy of Avon's students than Canton's--were used as an explicit whip for flagging effort or attention. Given few chances for independent thought or for initiative, Dale's students were yet more passive and unreflective in their behavior than were Chauncey's.

Fillmore

Fillmore draws a student population of working and lower class students. Twenty-three per cent were black in the year of the study, and a substantial but uncounted number came from families who had moved to Avon from Appalachia. The neighborhood had been integrated for over thirty years, but its economic standing and social fabric seemed to be deteriorating.

Fillmore is an example of the state of affairs in a school after control based on routinization of the school's academic and control activities has broken down. At the time of the study there had been serious problems with order for two or three years at least. The sources of the problem were lost in history. The taken-for-granted character of the school and any myth of coercive control were both gone from Fillmore, awash in generally boisterous student demeanor, common rule violations, and a cycle of mutual recrimination and hostility between students and a significant minority of teachers.

To judge from the behavior and the opinions of older teachers, the school had been run at one time with a reasonably successful myth of coercive control. At any rate, the nostrum they recommend for its current ills was a stronger and more certain dose of

coercion. This recommendation came not only from those whose relations with their classes had broken down but from many who managed to retain reasonably workmanlike and civil relations with their students--at least within the classroom. These teachers attributed the school's lack of coercive measures partly to the personality of the principal (who was new to the school but experienced in the system and well respected). Even more they stressed fear, on both his part and that of the district administration, of adverse pressure from parents and--primarily black--community groups should such coercive steps be taken. They thought the history of court decisions in favor of students rather than schools supported reluctance to be firm.

This opinion may have had some truth in it insofar as the administrators would have been reluctant to expel twenty or thirty students. (Fillmore did expel only one during the year--though Dale's new principal expelled ten, to some community comment.) But it is plain that neither district officers nor the principal objected to coercion as such when one considers that the principal estimated in his research interview that he used the paddle several times each week and with intent to sting the backside as well as the pride of the student. To have used it much more often would certainly have been to make it a common routine which would lose its effect upon the pride of both individuals and the student body as a whole.

Without a taken-for-granted routine and without an appearance of overwhelming coercive power, Fillmore could not control its students with direct use of coercion. And with this student body which looked ahead to dim occupational prospects, it had little to give in exchange for cooperation. Nor could it turn, as Hamilton did, to the creation of normative commitment. The routinized curriculum and the selection of a faculty who perceived students not easily amenable to the curriculum as simply academically or morally deficient precluded the kind of academic content and the kind of classroom relationships needed to generate such commitment. Some teachers and administrators--most notably the principal--did establish positive relationships with students by treating them with simple respect and courtesy. While this treatment considerably lessened tension and hostility where it was applied, it did not generate the kind of active engagement which some of the staff at Hamilton were able to engender from a portion of the students of similar background.

The situation at Fillmore thus suggests that the technology for obtaining order through a construction of reality by the staff is a fragile one. When a school, like those in Avon, commits all its resources to this strategy, and the construction fails so that the students come to see that the school is vulnerable to the force of their collective will, there are few resources for control which the adults can fall back on. This is especially the case where students believe the school has few meaningful benefits to confer upon them. When the most hostile students feel free to express themselves relatively unchecked, faculty hostility also increases in amount and ease of expression. As at Fillmore, a spiraling cycle of conflict is easily opened.

In this context it is not hard to understand why adults in the ordinary school which depends upon routine and the appearance of power for the maintenance of order are so intensely concerned with even minor infractions or deviations from routine. Such small incursions upon the school's carefully fabricated immutability may make its vulnerability evident. Students may come to perceive rules and routines for the fragile inventions they are and learn to disregard them with impunity. When this happens, Humpty Dumpty falls and breaks. It is very difficult to put him back together again.

CONCLUSION

School staffs are preoccupied with order because order is constantly threatened. The ordinary school building and school routine are constructed so that even fairly small amounts of innocent restless activity can disrupt academic efforts or endanger a child or his fellows. Intentional attacks upon classroom concentration or upon property or persons in the larger spaces of the school can easily find their target.

Adolescent energy and the discontents of some students arising from the compulsory character of school attendance supply the impetus for potential disruption. In some schools student discontent with some aspect of the school or its context is sufficient to make potential or actual disruption really severe.

The school faces these threats to the pursuit of its appointed business with an inadequate set of resources for control. Whether it tries to use as a basis for control normative commitment, the exchange of extrinsic rewards for cooperation, or the exercise of coercion, its resources will often be unequal to the task. Schools can most easily turn to control through reliance upon students' naive acceptance of the inevitability of passing cooperatively through an institution which contains every one of their age in the transformation from child to adult. When students do not believe such a passage to be either inevitable or useful for them, the school may control them by underscoring its legal and social mandate to regulate their lives and by appearing to possess more coercive resources than it could in fact muster if put to the test by large scale resistance.

These most successful patterns of control demand a hierarchical organizational structure and a standardization and routinization of activities which are ill-suited to education, especially to the education of those students who question the school's competence, good faith, or usefulness to their purposes. These are the very students most likely to create disorder and so to push the school to marshal its resources for maintaining order.

Schools compromise in the face of the opposing requirements of order and education. In so doing, they develop an array of patterns which vary with a great many specific conditions. Important among these conditions are the characteristics of each school's environment. Expectations of the community and the policies of the school board and district administration will affect every school in a system. At each individual school,

the recruitment and socialization of principals and teachers are significant. These must be considered as they interact with the characteristics of the students (and those of their parents.) I have described briefly patterns of control and education and their consequences in four junior high schools in two districts. These cases were not intended to demonstrate the logical possibilities, but to illustrate the complex constellations of concrete action in which the common problems of the school are expressed.

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